A SERMON

PREACH'D at

St. *Mary-le-Bow*, *June* 27. 1698.

Before the

SOCIETIES,

FOR

Reformation of MANNERS,

IN THE

City of *London* and *Westminster*.

Published at their Request.

By *THO. JEKILL*, D. D.

and PREACHER at the New Church,

in WESTMINSTER.

LONDON:

Printed by *R.* and *T. Mead*, for *Ralph Simpson*, and *Richard Cumberland*, at the *Harp*, and at the *Angel*, in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1698.

TO THE SOCIETIES, FOR *Reformation of* MANNERS, IN THE City of *London* and *Weſtminſter*.

GENTLEMEN,

ALthough I never had ſo much Vanity as to encline me to think any thing of mine worthy to be made thus Publick, much leſs ſo mean a Performance as this; yet having always an earneſt Zeal for the Intereſt of Religion *in general, and bearing an hearty Affection to your* Pious Undertaking *in particular, I have, without any great Difficulty, yielded to your Requeſt of ſending this Sermon thus abroad into the World, ſince you have thereby declar'd your good Opinion of it, and think that it may be ſome ways ſerviceable unto both.*

The Suitableneſs of the Subject to the Occaſion may not perhaps, be ſo obvious at firſt ſight to every Apprehenſion; but thoſe that conſider the Cauſe in which you are engag'd and know

2/6

how you have been uſed, and what Succeſs you have found, will ſoon perceive how agreeable it is thereto; yea, how neceſſary alſo to take off thoſe Objections, and to prevent thoſe Diſcouragements that have too often appear'd, and may yet be made uſe of againſt ſo excellent and glorious a Work, from the many Enemies it will certainly create, and the many Friends it may occaſion us to loſe: For, tho' the thing may be true as to the former, yet I very much queſtion whether ever it was ſo as to the latter, (for that Man either never was a true Friend, *or deſerves no longer to be ſo accounted or valued, that ſhall become an* Enemy *upon ſuch an Occaſion as this.) But admit it to be ſo in both, yet* Solomon *tells us, that it ſhall be otherwiſe at laſt, provided we do but the Things that* Pleaſe the Lord *now: And therefore, as I know you have been always careful of the one, ſo I doubt not but you have often experimented the Truth of the other, and ſo I hope you always will: For I am ſure it has been ſo with me; for which Reaſon, I have in the Application of this Aſſertion, to this preſent Occaſion, ſingl'd out from my own Experience all thoſe Inſtances of it, that I have herein given to confirm the Matter of Fact; except the laſt, and that alſo I do as firmly believe, and hope to find, as I can do any thing in the World; for I am very ſure it muſt and will be ſo.*

Enemies,

Enemies, indeed, we have all along had, and great ones too, and ſo we muſt expect as long as the Devil has any Intereſt in the World, and ſo ſtrong a Party amongſt Mankind: But what of all that? Were it worſe than it is? as long as the great God is for us, *we need not care* who is againſt us. *What, tho' the Age be vitious, and the* Great ones, *that ſhould have known and done better, have made it their Buſineſs, for Thirty Years together, to corrupt and debauch it? What, tho' the common People rage and rattle againſt thoſe that endeavour to reclaim them? Yea, what, tho' the* Magiſtrates *themſelves, who invite us to bring them Information againſt the Vices that reign amongſt us, and promiſe their utmoſt Aſſiſtance in the Suppreſſing of them, ſhould not only underhand, but even openly, and upon the Bench, and in the very Courts of Juſtice, appear to be the greateſt Patrons and Promoters of them; and inſtead of encouraging thoſe honeſt Informers, who thus come to them (upon ſo good an Occaſion as this) in the Fear of God, and in Charity to the Souls of Men, by making their Work eaſie and ſafe, do all that in them lies, to make it both troubleſome and dangerous, and thereby to beat them off from engaging any further therein: All which you and I have ſeen, and a great deal more too; and can therefore truly ſay, that the* King's Proclamation

clamation *does them no Wrong, in charging them as it does, with being* **in a great meaſure the Occaſion** *of the abounding of ſo much* **Impiety and Profaneneſs** *amongſt us: And what if it ſhould be ſo ſtill, and thoſe that have in this Cauſe* reſiſted unto Blood ſtriving againſt Sin *ſhould be again beaten, and wounded at the very Doors of theſe Magiſtrates, without Protection or Redreſs, and meet with nothing upon Complaint but Scoffs and Jears, as I have known it but too frequently to be? What I ſay, tho' it ſhould be thus, and a great deal worſe; yet you have no Reaſon to deſiſt, or be diſcourag'd; for that God that has ſupported you hitherto, and proſper'd you ſo exceedingly (as is ſufficiently known from the ſeveral Accounts that have been given of your Affairs in Print; firſt by the Right Reverend Biſhop of* Glouceſter, *and ſince by the Reverend Mr.* Woodward, *and ſome others) will do the ſame ſtill, and both continue and enlarge his bountiful Goodneſs towards you: He knows that what you have done has been for his Name's ſake alone; and that not a Man of you, has ever expected, much leſs deſir'd or receiv'd,* one Farthing of Profit, *by all that you have done; nay that, beſides the indefatigable Pains which you have taken therein; you have expended vaſt Sums of your own, in Carrying on this excellent Work, notwithſtanding*

all

all the Reproaches that the World has caſt upon you, as if you made great Advantages of it to your ſelves, and did all for filthy Lucre's ſake; *for no other Reaſon, but becauſe* the former Governours, *as* Nehemiah *ſays, Chap.* 5. 15. uſed to do ſo, *and* made their Servants do *the ſame: But ſo have not you done; nay, I know you can, and do defie the moſt inquiſitive and implacable Malice to faſten any one Thing of that Nature upon any of you: For, as you* have waſh'd your Hands in Innocency *as to that, ſo you are able to* compaſs God's Altar, *in the Integrity of your Hearts, as to every thing elſe that concerns this whole Affair, and can appeal to him to juſtifie you therein.*

There are, I know, many of our Diſſenting Brethren, that have engag'd in this good Work, as well as you, and have form'd themſelves into Societies for the Carrying of it on, as you have done, and that very heartily too: But that is rather a Reproach to thoſe of your own Communion than to you, ſince by their refuſing to aſſiſt and join with you, they do in a manner force you to ſeek Aſſiſtance elſewhere. Let but theſe Men that ſeem to be thus jealous both of you and them, aſſiſt in this Pious Undertaking, with that Zeal and Vigour that you have done, and go through with it, as they ought to do, and I dare engage that you, and they too that are thus reproach'd, will gladly deſiſt, and with

Tranſports

Tranſports of Joy, become Spectators only, and concern your ſelves no further in it, unleſs it be to bleſs God for them that are willing thus to take it out of your Hands, and to recommend them to his Grace, for all neceſſary Aſſiſtance to proſper ſo good a Work here, and for an eternal Recompence of Reward ſuitable to it hereafter; as I now moſt heartily do all thoſe, that are already engag'd in it; being in all ſincerity,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt Affectionate,
and Faithful Friend,
and Servant,
in CHRIST JESUS,

Weſtm. June 30. 1698.

THO. JEKILL.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE is now in the Preſs, a Treatiſe, which gives a moſt exact Account of thoſe juſt and prudent Meaſures, whereby the *Reformation of Manners* amongſt us hath been hitherto carried on; with Inſtructions for the Beginning and Advancing it in other Parts of the Nation; and with many moving Arguments, to excite all Ranks of Men thereunto.

They will be Sold by *Ralph Simpſon*, at the *Harp*, in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard; and many other Bookſellers.

PROV.

PROV. XVI. 7.

When a Man's Ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him.

THE Words having no Difficulty in themſelves, nor any Dependance upon the Context, will not need any Enquiry, either into their Meaning or Coherence; ſo that I ſhall be wholly at Liberty to enter immediately upon that, which I chiefly intended in the Choice of them, which was to ſhew the Truth and Certainty of what is ſo poſitively affirm'd in them, and to apply them to the preſent Occaſion: For if the Work of Reforming Mens Lives and Manners, and reclaiming them from their Vices, which we are all ſo deſirous to Promote, be one of thoſe Ways that are here

Deſcrib'd, and the Iſſue of it be ſuch as is here Promis'd; Who is there that does not eaſily ſee, what great Encouragement is hereby given to the Uſing our honeſt and utmoſt Endeavours, by all Pious and Prudent Ways to the Carrying of it on, to the beſt Advantage: Eſpecially when we ſee how it obviates a grand Objection uſually made againſt this Undertaking, from the many Enemies that it will create us, when we ſee it ſo particularly aſſerted by the Divine Oracles, that it makes even thoſe *Enemies to be at Peace with us?* In the Handling therefore of theſe Words; I ſhall endeavour to do theſe Two Things:

I. I ſhall ſhew that what *Solomon* here aſſerts is true.

II. I ſhall apply it to this preſent Occaſion.

1. By ſhewing that this is one of thoſe Ways that *Pleaſe the Lord.* 2. By ſhewing that it will have this Effect. 3. By adding ſomething by way of Direction and Incouragement to the Practice

Practice of it, as a Thing moſt excellent and commendable every way.

1. I ſhall ſhew that what *Solomon* here aſſerts is true, concerning the Event and Iſſue of a good Man's Ways, which are ſo pleaſing to the LORD, and that notwithſtanding all that may be objected againſt it, either from thoſe many Texts of Scripture, that ſeem to contradict it, or from the many Experiences of a whole Cloud of Witneſſes, that may be produc'd againſt it, even from amongſt the Beſt of Men, that have often found it otherwiſe, to their Coſt and Sorrow; for I am well aware, that a great Deal may be ſaid from both theſe Heads againſt what *Solomon* here aſſerts; but yet for all that, I hope to make it plainly appear, that this Aſſertion is true, both by the Arguments that I ſhall produce to prove it, and from the Anſwers which I ſhall give to thoſe Things that may be objected againſt it. And here, as I ſhall not go from the Compaſs of the Text for the one, ſo neither ſhall I

depart from the plain Current and Tenour of the Scriptures for the other.

The Proof now of the Truth of this Aſſertion is plain and eaſie from the Text it ſelf; and that, 1. If we conſider the Perſon that is here ſaid to do it, *the Lord.* 2. The Occaſion of his interpoſing and acting in this manner, which is from the Acceptableneſs of the Thing it ſelf unto him. 3. From the natural Tendency of it to the producing of this Effect.

1. We may ſee a ſufficient Evidence of the Truth of this Aſſertion in the Text, from the Perſon that is here ſaid to do it; For the Wiſe Man leaves it not to that, which we call Chance or Fortune, nor to the Management of Humane Counſels or Endeavours, but derives it from a much higher Power, and a more certain Original, even from the firſt and greateſt Cauſe of all; for he tells us, that *the Lord* himſelf will do it, He that made and governs all Things in general, and that can create this Bleſſing in particular; for *it is the Lord*

Lord that gives his People the Bleſſing of Peace, Pſal. 29. 11. Now we know,

1. He can certainly do it, for he has all Things in his Hand that are neceſſary for it; and *works all* Ways *after the Counſel of his own Will*, as the Apoſtle ſays, *Eph.* 1. 11. The Wiſe Man therefore tells us, *Prov.* 21. 1. *That the King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord; and that as the Rivers of Water he turneth it whither ſoever he will*; as the Husbandman, or Gardiner in watering of his Ground can ſo order the Trenches, as to water what part he pleaſes, either more or leſs, turning the Stream every way as he has a Mind to it, ſo can the LORD do by the Heart of the King, inclining it which way ſoever he thinks fit, and as may beſt ſerve the wiſe and gracious Ends of all his Providential Diſpenſations: And if he can do this by *the King's Heart*; which *Solomon* alſo tells us, *Prov.* 25. 3. *is unſearchable*, and which we know is more Arbitrary and Uncontroulable than any other Man's: How much more may he do it,

it, by thoſe that are in a much lower Degree and Station? If the Heart with all its Powers and Faculties be thus at his Diſpoſal, it is ſufficient for our Purpoſe, and we may be ſure, that he can eaſily do what *Solomon* here aſſerts.

2. He has done it heretofore, and the many Inſtances of it are upon Record in Scripture, to excite and encourage us to expect that it ſhall be ſo again, as often as he pleaſes, and ſees that there is Occaſion for it. Yea, how many ſignal Inſtances of it are there in *Jacob*'s Caſe alone? Firſt, When *Laban* purſued after him, with no good Intention, you may be ſure, but was prevented in his Deſign by GOD, who would not ſuffer him ſo much as to ſpeak an angry Word to him, *Gen.* 31. 29. So alſo it was in the Caſe of *Eſau*, who had vow'd and prepar'd for his Deſtruction, and came with an Armed Force, and an enrag'd and revengeful Mind, to execute what he had both in his Heart, and in his Hand, and that too upon one of the moſt favour-

able

able Opportunities for ſuch a Purpoſe, that the moſt powerful and implacable Malice could wiſh for; Inſomuch, that *Jacob* himſelf was exceedingly afraid, and greatly diſtreſſed, and expects nothing but Miſchief and Ruine; but GOD turn'd *Eſau*'s Heart alſo, as he did *Laban*'s, the Night before they met, and made him embrace, and kiſs, and ſhew the greateſt Kindneſs, where he intended to deſtroy: And I mention this the rather, becauſe *Solomon* tells us, *Prov.* 18. 19. *That a Brother offended is harder to be won than a ſtrong City, and their Contentions are like the Bars of a Caſtle.* The ſame alſo appears in the Caſe of the *Schechemites*, tho Slaughter of them was ſo barbarous and provoking a Thing, that *Jacob* himſelf was in the greateſt Conſternation that ever he was in his Life, dreading the Fury of the Inhabitants of the Country, that they would all riſe againſt him as one Man, and cut off his whole Family at once; and in this Fright he flies from thence, and calls upon GOD for Pro-

Protection, as he had formerly done in the Day of his Diſtreſs, and finds the ſame Succeſs; *For the Terror of the Lord was upon all the Cities that were round about him, that they purſued not after him*, Gen. 35. 5. And was it not ſo alſo, when *Pharaoh* gave him the Land of *Goſhen* to dwell in, that ſo none of the *Egyptians* might injure him or his? becauſe *every Shepherd* (as *Jacob* and his Sons were) *was* (as we are told, *Gen.* 46. 34.) *an Abomination to the Egyptians.*

And what he found ſo often, was more frequently and ſignally made good in a Multitude of Inſtances in his Poſterity. How cruelly and unjuſtly they were uſed in *Egypt*, every one that knows any thing of their being there at all, is ſufficiently inform'd; and muſt therefore admire, that they ſhould after ſuch inhumane and barbarous Uſage, which redounded alſo ſo much to the Gain and Advantage of their Oppreſſors, come out from thence in ſo peaceable a Manner, that *not ſo much as a Dog wagg'd his Tongue againſt any*

any of the Children of Iſrael, tho' there was *a great Cry through all the Land of Egypt*; becauſe *there was not an Houſe, in which there was not one*, even of their firſt-born, *dead*. Nay, to increaſe the Wonder as well as to confirm the Point in hand, their Enemies ſhew'd them more Kindneſs at their Departure, than they would have expected from their beſt Friends; for they loaded them with Gifts, even to the Impoveriſhing of themſelves: Inſomuch, that they would not have been more ſpoil'd by the moſt prevailing Conqueror, and all from the Hand of GOD, who *gave his People ſuch Favour in the Sight of the Egyptians, that they lent them all that they requir'd; inſomuch, that they ſpoil'd the Egyptians*, as *Moſes* tells us, *Exod.* 12. 35, 36. Nor was it otherwiſe with them afterwards; for tho' he often *ſold them into their Enemies Hands* for their Sins, yet he *caus'd them to be pitied of all thoſe that carried them away Captives*, Pſal. 106. 46. and not only to ſhew Kindneſs to them in the

Land of their Captivity, but to ſend them back with ſpecial Tokens of their Good-will to them into their own Land; according to *Solomon*'s Prayer, 1 *K.* 8. 50. For juſt ſo it fared with them under the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and at their return from thence; as you may plainly ſee in the Caſe of *Daniel* and his Companions, of *Eſther* and *Mordecai*, whilſt they were there, and of *Nehemiah* and *Ezra*, and the whole Body of the People, when they were ſo freely, and ſo kindly ſent home, by the ſpecial Order of the King of *Babylon*, and under the Protection of the Government it ſelf. But what need we go further than our own Country for Inſtances of it, when we alſo have had Wolves taking Care of the Sheep, Papiſts preſerving Proteſtants, (as King *Phillip* did Queen *Elizabeth*) and Men of no Religion aſſiſting vigorouſly in the Maintenance and Preſervation of it; which tho' it may, and does ſtain all the Glory, that might otherwiſe have been due to them, for ſuch worthy Deeds;

Deeds; yet it does the more advance the Glory of GOD, whoſe Grace and Power is ſo remarkably ſeen therein, and gives Encouragement to good Men, who ſincerely deſire and deſign, what they only Craftily and Mechanically do, to purſue the ſame, with greater Vigour and Zeal, and more comfortable Hopes of Succeſs.

3. He has the ſame Kindneſs for his People ſtill that ever he had, and will certainly do it again, when there is occaſion for it, and it conduces to his own Glory, and their Good: His Church never dies, tho' the Members of it do; nor does his Love ever ceaſe or change, but deſcends to all Generations; and therefore, if he does not ſhew it at one time, and in the ſame manner, that he has done at another, we muſt conclude, that he ſees it better for them to have their Enemies hate them, than to be at Peace with them: Their Enmity may be better to them, than their Good-will; and they may get more by it in the Exerciſe of

their Faith and Patience, and the Increaſe of their other Graces, as well as bring more Glory to GOD, and good to others too: Thus it was with the *Jewiſh* Nation under the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, after which we hear no more Complaints of their Idolatry; That having perfectly cured them of that ſort of Wickedneſs: For tho' other Sins reign'd amongſt them ſtill, yet they never fell into that again: And happy would they have been indeed, if ſuch another Captivity, could have as effectually cur'd them of all the reſt. This being of the Nature of other Afflictions, and has the ſame Deſign, of bringing thoſe back again to GOD's Law, that are gone aſtray from it; and muſt therefore be an Evidence of GOD's Faithfulneſs, as well as Love to his People; So that it does in no wiſe contradict the Wiſe Man's Aſſertion in the Text, but rather confirms it; for when a Man has a much better Thing done for him, than was promis'd, he can never be ſaid to be wrong'd

wrong'd; nor can he that made the Promiſe, be tax'd with being worſe than his Word: And this brings me to another Conſideration, that will ſufficiently determine this Point, and ſtop the Mouth of all Objections drawn from the Veracity of GOD: For,

4. He is as true to his Promiſe as ever, and as his Love can never change, ſo *his Faithfulneſs and Truth can never fail*; and therefore, tho' we do not at preſent underſtand, and are not able to comprehend the Nature and Reaſon of his acting in this Matter, yet we may reſt upon this, that *he is Truth* it ſelf and *cannot lye*; and upon that we may ſtay our ſelves, and wait till we ſee the Thing it ſelf confirm'd by the Event. If this therefore be his Word and Promiſe, and we are careful to perform that which it is made to, we may alſo (under the fore-mention'd Limitations) expect the ſame Bleſſing according to the Letter: For as *Balaam* ſays, *Numb.* 23. 19. *God is not a Man that he ſhould lye, nor the Son of Man that*

that he ſhould repent; what he hath ſaid he will do, and what he hath ſpoken he will make good; which as it proves this Particular, ſo it gives us a freſh Inſtance of the whole: For that Prophet was a declar'd Enemy to *Iſrael*; and went to them with a full Purpoſe to do them Miſchief, being hired by the faireſt Proſpect of great Rewards to Curſe them; But tho' it were ſo much in his Will and Deſire, yet it was not in his Power, GOD having not only reſtrain'd him therein, but perfectly over-rul'd him too, and made him to *Bleſs* where he intended to *Curſe*, and to ſpeak Peace where he deſign'd to proclaim War, and to deſtroy.

2. The Truth of *Solomon*'s Aſſertion will further appear, if we conſider the Occaſion of GOD's interpoſing and acting in this Manner: For it is in a Caſe, that is very acceptable to him, and ſuch as muſt of neceſſity incline him to it; for which Reaſon therefore the Wiſe Man thus expreſſes himſelf, That from the very nature of the Thing, they

they may ſee a Confirmation of the Truth of the Aſſertion. Thus, therefore GOD himſelf appeals to *Cain*'s own Reaſon and Judgment, to determine this Matter, whether a good Action can poſſibly miſs of Acceptance with him, *Gen.* 4. 7. He that pleaſes GOD cannot fail of being kindly receiv'd, and plentifully rewarded by him. Now nothing pleaſes him better than to ſee us always imploy'd in well doing; its therefore call'd a *Walking-worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing*, Col. 1. 10. *And doing that which is well pleaſing in his Sight*, Heb. 13. 21. Its therefore ſaid of *Enoch*, who always *walk'd* thus *with God*, and for which *God took him* to himſelf, that *before his Tranſlation he had this Teſtimony that he pleaſed God*, *Heb.* 11. 5. St. *John* therefore makes this the Ground of our *Confidence*, of being heard and anſwered in all our Prayers, *becauſe we keep his Commandments*, which he calls the *doing that which is well pleaſing in his Sight*, 1 Joh. 3. 22. So that it muſt needs be as the

Wiſe

Wiſe Man here ſays, ſince whatever pleaſes GOD muſt of neceſſity obtain from him, whatever he has promis'd to it; for in this Caſe his infinite and unalterable Love to Goodneſs muſt incline him to it, as well as his Juſtice, and we may aſſure our ſelves: That he will do it when he is himſelf ſo particularly concern'd in it, when it is for his own ſake as well as ours, that he both promiſes and confirms it.

3. The Truth of this Aſſertion in the Text will yet further appear, from the natural Tendency of the Thing it ſelf, to the producing of this good Effect, as well as to the engaging of the great GOD to concern himſelf in it; for there is a plain Probability of it, as a ſubordinate Means from whence in the common and ordinary Courſe of Things, it may well be expected: For which Reaſon St. *Peter* appeals to the common Senſe and Judgment of all Mankind to confirm it, 1 *Pet.* 3. 13. *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is Good?* And there-

therefore adviſes all Chriſtians to have *their Converſation honeſt amongſt the Gentiles; that whereas they ſpeak againſt them as Evil doers, they may by their good Converſation, which they ſhall behold, glorifie God in the Day of Viſitation*, Chap. 2. 12. And in the Third Chap. of that Epiſt. Ver. 16. adviſes them to have *a good Conſcience; that whereas they may meet with ſome that are* very apt *to ſpeak againſt them as Evil doers; they may be aſham'd that falſly accuſe their good Converſation in Chriſt:* For which Reaſon St. *Paul* alſo tells us, *Rom.* 14. 18. That *he who thus ſerveth Chriſt, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.* Yea, *Solomon* aſſures us, *Prov.* 3. 4. That ſuch *ſhall find Favour and Eſteem before God and Man.* And, indeed, a prudent and a pious Converſation has ſuch Charms, that it will make thoſe that will not joyn with us therein, yet commend and value us the more for it: And tho' they do not intend us any Good, yet they will not eaſily be brought to do us any Harm: Nay, St. *Paul* tells

us, *Rom.* 5.7. That they will rather harm themſelves than us, and will even venture their Lives for us, ſince whatever they may *do for a righteous Man*, they will go to the utmoſt Length therein, *for a good Man*: For which Reaſon the Elders of the *Jews* beſought our Saviour to help the *Centurion*'s Servant, for tho' his Maſter was not of their Communion, yet they knew him to be a good Man, and ready to aſſiſt and encourage any good Work, even for thoſe that differ'd from him in Opinion and Judgment: For ſay they, *Luk.* 7. 4, 5. *He is* for this Reaſon *worthy* of this Kindneſs that we ask; and we are able to give good Proof of it, having often try'd him, and have always found it ſo, and have a ſtanding Inſtance of it amongſt us; *for he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue.*

Object. But to all this may be objected, what the Scriptures ſay, that good Men ſhall be expos'd to divers Afflictions and Calamities, and be *perſecuted* and *hated* for their Goodneſs; for ſo our Saviour tells his Diſciples, *Mat.* 10.

17,

17, 18, 21, 22. They ſhall be *that they ſhall* not only *be deliver'd up to the Counſels*, but that *they ſhall be ſcourg'd in their Synagogues*; yea, *the Brother ſhall deliver up the Brother to Death, and the Father the Child*, and that *they ſhould be hated of all Men for his Names ſake*: And that their Perſecutors ſhould think that *they did God ſervice in the killing of them*, as he ſays, *John* 16. 2. St. *Paul* alſo tells us, 2 *Tim.* 3. 12. *That all that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus, or* according to the Chriſtian Religion, *ſhall*, and muſt expect to *ſuffer Perſecution*; and what they thus aſſert, a Multitude of good Men have found by Experience to be but too true. Nay, *David* expreſly ſays, *Pſal.* 38. 20. That he had many powerful and implacable Enemies, that continually *rendred him Evil for Good*, and were *his Adverſaries becauſe he follow'd the Thing that was Good.* Thus it was alſo with the holy Prophets, Apoſtles and Martyrs, yea, with CHRIST himſelf, and with a vaſt and innumerable

Company of his Followers, who all found it ſo too: But yet all theſe things do not ſo fully contradict this Aſſertion, as to make the Truth and Certainty of it to be queſtion'd; for all this may be, and yet *Solomon* be in the Right too. Therefore, to all this, I anſwer,

1. Temporal Promiſes are never to be underſtood ſtrictly and abſolutely, as univerſally and always true according to the Letter, but as commonly ſo; and therefore muſt ſtill be taken in a Limited and Conditional Senſe, with a Reſerve always to the Will and Pleaſure of Almighty GOD, the Good of his Servants, and the wiſe Ends of his Government; if it be for his Glory and the Good of others, but yet ſo as always to conclude honourably for GOD, that he never departs from the ſtricteſt Rules of Truth and Juſtice; and that if he gives not the Thing promiſed, he will certainly give that which is better; for he will in no Senſe be worſe than his Word; he may go beyond it, but he will never come ſhort of it.

2. He

2. He ſeldom ſets any particular Time to this ſort of Promiſes, but reſerves that to himſelf: And where he does not ſo, its a plain Indication that he intends to take his own Time, which is always beſt, and that therefore we ought to wait his Leaſure.

3. But let me ask thee, O Man, whoever thou art, that makeſt this Objection; Haſt thou been as punctual in the Performance of all thoſe Duties, that are made the Condition of all theſe Promiſes, as thou art punctual and peremptory in claiming the Performance of them? If ſo, my Soul for thine, he will aſſuredly make it good to a Title, for he can never fail thee.

4. But let the Worſt come to the Worſt (as we commonly ſay) and admit, that thou haſt been faithful, and yet haſt not found this to be true, let not this be any Diſcouragement or Obſtacle to the Perſeverance in thy Duty ſtill, for there is another Life after this, and what's wanting here ſhall certainly be abundantly made good to thee

thee there: Which is always the Caſe of thoſe, whom GOD has thought fit to deliver ſo far into their Enemies Hands, as to loſe their Lives by their Power and Malice, or in any other Senſe, to fall ſhort of a full, and perfect Enjoyment of their utmoſt Expectation here in this World: And therefore, after the Apoſtle had brought in a whole Cloud of Witneſſes to prove this, he exhorts all Chriſtians to *run with Patience the Race that was ſet before them*, and *to look unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of their Faith, who for the Joy that was ſet before him, endur'd the Croſs and deſpiſed the Shame*, Heb. 12. 1, 2. Let what will happen to us here, the *Hope that is ſet before us is as an Anchor, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*, and will be ſufficient to ſtay our Souls, and to keep them from ſinking, or being ſhipwreck'd in the greateſt Storms that can ariſe in the moſt Tempeſtuous Sea of all Worldly Perſecutions and Afflictions; For we ſhall not only arrive ſafely at that deſir'd Haven, but ſhall alſo

alſo be there both fill'd with Joy and crown'd with Glory.

2. I ſhall apply this Aſſertion to this preſent and happy Occaſion, for ſo I muſt call it, and hope to make it appear to be ſo.

1. By ſhewing that the Work we are engag'd in, and are ſo deſirous to promote, is really and truly one of thoſe Ways that pleaſe the LORD, nay, perhaps it will be found one of thoſe that are moſt pleaſing to him, and that it's one of the beſt Things that we can do. For,

1. It is certainly a good Work in it ſelf, and muſt have the Approbation and Eſteem of all wiſe and good Men; The very Name of the Thing carries Honour and Goodneſs in it, and wants for no other Teſtimony of its Worth and Excellency; nay, its what the very worſt of Men cannot but commend and wiſh for in others, tho' they will not be brought under the Diſcipline of it themſelves. They would have no Body to debauch their own Wives

Wives and Daughters; nay, they will highly reſent it, and be ready to fight and kill any one that ſhall attempt it. They would not have their Children bred to Lying or Thieving, nor their Servants diſſolute and falſe; and if they do not love to walk in the Ways of Religion and Vertue themſelves, yet they cannot but approve of thoſe that do ſo, and eſteem them the more for it. They even ſtand in Awe of Goodneſs, and cannot help having a very great Veneration for it, and forbear ſhewing it upon occaſion. Thoſe very Perſons amongſt us, that have ſhew'd any diſlike to this good Work that we are engag'd in, I mean thoſe of them that pretend to be of our Communion, will, I know, readily grant, that the firſt Reformers of our Church from Popery, were worthy of all Honour in all the Churches of the Saints; and that their Name and Memory is precious; and that we ought always to mention them with the greateſt Deference and Reſpect. Now if that was ſo good

good a Work, this certainly cannot be a bad one. Did those pious and good Men do so well in Reforming the Church from Popery, and must they be thought to do ill, that endeavour to reform it from Profaneness, especially now when we are under the particular Obligations of that great Blessing it self, as well as the many others since, to do all that we can therein? Is it not the Glory of our Church, to be Vertuous as well as True, to be holy in Life, as well as sound in the Faith? Well, therefore does the King's Proclamation charge those that are Enemies to this Work with **being a Reproach to our Religion, as well as a Discredit to the Kingdom**; and I may add especially to our Church, to which they are indeed the greatest Scandal, whatever Boasts they may make of their being some of the truest Members of it. Is this the Kindness to the best Mother in the World? And are these the Effects of it? When and where did she ever give the least Countenance or Encouragement

ment to any ſuch Practices, as you ſeem to make her to allow of? Let none therefore from henceforth call themſelves her Sons, unleſs they mend their own Lives, and rejoyce to ſee the ſame good Work effectually carried on amongſt all the reſt of her Children: For till they do ſo, they can never, I am ſure, ſhew any good Title to that Character and Relation: They do in no wiſe belong to her, but rather to another Society, which as we can take no delight to mention, ſo there will be no occaſion for it, ſince they and every Body elſe may ſee whoſe Children they are by the Temper they are of, and the Works that they will do.

2. It is the Work of GOD, which he actually engages himſelf in, as well as puts us upon. How does he continually, both in his Word and in his Works, ſtrive with Men to reclaim them, and *to bring them by his Spirit back again unto his Law?* Inſomuch, that we may ſay, as *Iſa.* 5. 4. *What could have*

have been done more herein that he has not done? The whole Creation is a ſtanding Inſtance of it, and a viſible Sermon to inſtruct us in it; which his Word plainly explains, and his Providence particularly applies, in the moſt pathetical and convincing Manner to all Mankind: What are his Kindneſſes and Favours? What are his Chaſtiſements and Corrections, but ſo many powerful Motives, to prevail upon us, to reform and amend as well as to demonſtrate his particular Concern in this Matter, by what he thus actually does in it?

3. It is the Work that he ſent the Bleſſed JESUS into the World about, and which he ſpent his whole Life in, as all may ſee that will but look into what the Evangeliſts relate of him; yea, in which he ſometimes acted in the ſame Manner that you are excited to, when he *whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, overthrew the Tables of the Money-Changers*, and the Seats of them that ſold Doves; and

thereby forc'd them to deſiſt from any further Profanation of that Sacred Place, which had been dedicated to a better Uſe and Purpoſe, by putting the Laws in execution, that had been formerly made againſt all ſuch Wickedneſs, and which expreſly forbid the making GOD's *Houſe an Houſe of Merchandize:* So far was he from being diſcourag'd at the Objection of a private Station, or from ſtaying till the Magiſtrate call'd him to it, by putting him into an Office that requir'd it, that he puts himſelf upon doing the Work, chooſing rather to expoſe himſelf to their Cenſures, than to ſuffer a Work ſo neceſſary at that time, and ſo ſerviceable to the Intereſt of Religion, to be any longer neglected.

4. It is a Work that he imploys his beſt Servants in, and whom he has the greateſt Value for; Such are his Prophets and Apoſtles, his Saints, yea, his Angels too; who, as *Heb.* 1. 14. are therefore ſtyl'd, *Miniſtring Spirits, becauſe they are ſent forth to miniſter to them that*

that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation. I need not tell you what a Value he puts upon all theſe, and how dear they are to him; but you may eaſily ſee what Value he puts upon this Work, and of what account he eſteems it, when he calls forth and engages ſuch Perſons as theſe in it. For, as when a Sovereign Prince ſends a particular Favourite, whom he delights to honour, upon any Foreign Embaſie, we conclude by the Quality of the Perſon, and the great Affection that his Prince bears him, that the Buſineſs he goes about is exceeding great and honourable, for elſe a meaner Perſon might have been ſent as well: So we may by the ſame Rule judge truly of this Matter, and conclude, that the Work muſt be great in it ſelf, and of high Eſteem in the Sight of GOD, or elſe ſuch eminent Perſons, and ſo well belov'd, wou'd not have been imploy'd in it.

5. It is a Work that he has ſignally own'd, and remarkably bleſs'd; and that not only in thoſe that have been par-

particularly call'd to it, but in thoſe alſo that have voluntarily offer'd themſelves to the Promoting of it. Such as *Phineas*, of whom the moſt honourable mention is made, both by *Moſes* and the *Pſalmiſt*, and upon whom the greateſt Bleſſings were entail'd: For *Moſes* tells us, That what he did *in executing Judgment* upon Two of the greateſt and moſt ſcandalous Offenders, was out of Zeal to GOD, and Love to his Country; and that therefore *God would give him his Covenant of Peace*, and that it ſhould include his Poſterity too, and prove *the Covenant of an everlaſting Prieſthood*, Numb. 25. 11, 12, 13. But *David* goes further, and not only commends the Fact as a due Execution of Juſtice, but relates the happy Iſſue and Event of it, in ſtopping of a grievous Plague, by which GOD himſelf ſhew'd his Approbation of it in the higheſt manner that could be: But tells us alſo, that Poſterity ſhall always ſpeak of him with Honour, and not only juſtifie the Fact

Fact in him, but eſteem the Zeal that he expreſs'd therein moſt worthy of Imitation: For, *it ſhall*, ſays he, *Pſal.* 106. 32. *be counted unto him for Righteouſneſs unto all Generations for evermore.* Not that the Fact it ſelf is to be imitated by us, till we can ſhew the ſame Authority that he had, and demonſtrate that we have the ſame Spirit to call us to it, that ſo eminently appear'd in him: But the ſame Zeal is certainly to be brought into Example, and is moſt worthy to be follow'd upon all Occaſions. Is not good *Nehemiah* alſo another Inſtance of this? who for putting himſelf upon this good Work, and ſeeking thereby the Welfare of his Country, in repairing the Temple, as well as rebuilding the City, and in reſtoring Religion, when he had brought back the People, was highly honour'd, and remarkably own'd, and bleſs'd by GOD for what he had done therein; Inſomuch, that he does himſelf beg to be always dealt with accordingly for time to come, ſaying,

Neh.

Neh. 13. 14. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good Deeds, that I have done for the House of my God, and for the Offices thereof.* And does not St. *James* alſo give us as great a Character of this Work as can be deſir'd? When he ſpeaks of it as a Thing that is as highly meritorious and commendable as the *Saving of a Soul from Death*, and procuring Pardon *for a Multitude of Sins:* For ſo he expreſly ſtyles it, *Jam.* 5. 19, 20. Brethren, *If any of you do err from the Faith, and one Convert him, Let him know, that he which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins.* And may I not add to all this, the Things that your Eyes have ſeen, and the wonderful Succeſs that GOD has given to this your pious Undertaking, ſince you firſt began, when *they were but few of you*, and *thoſe* in a manner *Strangers*, and without Power and Authority *in the Land*, that then ventured upon it: For how have your Numbers been increas'd, and your Hands been ſtrengthned, and your Work made proſperous ever ſince, thro' the good Hand of your GOD upon you? And what Encouragement does this give you to go on therein with your utmoſt Vigour and Zeal, not doubting but that he will ſtill own you in it, as he has hitherto done.

6. It

6. It is a Work which the greateſt and beſt of Men have not thought it beneath them to do their utmoſt in; as will ſufficiently appear from the Quality and Stations of thoſe that have voluntarily offer'd themſelves to it, and been moſt zealous in it. Such as *Moſes* and *Joſhua*, *David* and *Solomon*, *Aſa* and *Jehoſaphat*, *Hezekiah* and *Joſiah*, who were all Perſons of the higheſt Rank and Order, and in the moſt eminent Place and Power, and were all of them as truly Great for undertaking this Work, as for the Stations they were in, and the Diadems which they wore.

7. It is the very End and Deſign of all their Greatneſs; for they are made ſo only, that they may do the more Good; they are none of them rais'd to thoſe Heights to ſerve themſelves, but to ſerve the Publick; not to be gaz'd at and admir'd by ſome, but to be uſeful unto all that they can have any Influence upon, eſpecially in the ſuppreſſing of all manner of Wickedneſs and Vice: For ſo the Two great Apoſtles tell us, that they are the *Miniſters of God for Good*; and that *they bear not the Sword in vain*, but are to *execute Wrath*, and inflict Puniſhment *upon thoſe that do Evil*, *Rom.* 13. 3, 4. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14. The wiſe Man alſo tells us, *Prov.* 20. 8. *That a King that ſitteth upon the Throne of Judgment ſcattereth away all Evil with his Eyes*, will put all Wickedneſs out of Countenance, and drive it away from

him, by frowning upon those that allow themselves in it, and by smiling upon those that are vertuous; and thereby so **distinguish upon all Occasions Men of Piety and Vertue** from all others, **by particular Marks of their Royal Favour,** that they may **give the greatest Encouragement to Religion and Morality.**

8. It is that which GOD is highly offended with the Neglect of, and which he has not only severely threatned to punish, but has actually destroy'd whole Kingdoms and Nations, as well as private Families for: As we may plainly see in the Case of old *Eli*, as well as of that of the Kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*. None could give better Advice than *Eli* did, none could more pathetically Admonish and Reprove others for any Wickedness, than he did his Sons for theirs; But because he did not act as a publick Magistrate, as well as a private Parent, and interpose his Authority to restrain them, by putting the Laws in Execution against them, he is made a terrible Example of the mischievous Consequence of all such Remissness; for it was the Occasion of his own Death, and the *Cutting off his House*, and reducing his Posterity to a *Morsel of Bread*. How far this also contributed to the Destruction of *Israel* and *Judah*, you may soon see by what the Prophet *Jeremiah* says, *Chap.* 5. 7, 8, 9. concerning GOD's Resentment of their Wickedness,

Wickedneſs, and his Abhorrence of their Nation for it: For after he had charg'd them with the greateſt Wickedneſs, that abounded every-where amongſt them, he expoſtulates the Caſe thus with them; *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? Shall I not viſit for theſe Things? Shall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* Yes, certainly it ſhall; and ſo at laſt it was.

2. I ſhall further apply this Aſſertion in the Text to this preſent Occaſion, by ſhewing that it ſhall have the ſame Effect; and indeed, if we conſider this Caſe under the ſame Limitations and Allowances, that we have done all others of this Nature, we may with as good Reaſon expect the ſame Succeſs; for if we thus *Pleaſe the Lord, he will make our Enemies to be at Peace with us.*

1. They ſhall be ſo far *at Peace with us*, as to allow of the Teſtimony which we bear at any time againſt their Wickedneſs; they ſhall publickly own the Truth of what they are accus'd of, tho' it be in it ſelf never ſo ſhameful; yea, tho' for a conſiderable time they may reproach their Accuſers with Falſhood therein; yet when they come to be confronted with them, they ſhall not be able to reply againſt the Charge, or to deny the Truth and Honeſty of it.

2. They ſhall be at Peace with our Perſons, ſo as not to attempt the doing them any harm, tho' they live near us, and may have fair and

frequent Opportunities for it, yet their Hands ſhall be ſo tied to their good Behaviour, that they ſhall not be able to hurt us; yea, tho' their Hearts are enrag'd, and their Mouths are open'd againſt us, and their Tongues let looſe upon us, yet they ſhall not be ſuffer'd to do us any Injury. He that made the hungry Lions thus to be at Peace with *Daniel*; and the devouring Fire with the Three Children that were caſt into it, will do the ſame by us and them, and make our moſt potent and enrag'd Enemies rather to treat us well, than by *any means* to harm us.

3. They ſhall be at Peace with our Proceedings, and the Methods we take to reclaim them in their Judgments, and in their Conſciences, tho' they are not ſo at preſent in their Affections, and in their Paſſions: Theſe may, perhaps, prompt them to accuſe us of Falſhood and Perjury, of Malice and Envy, of Hatred and a revengeful Spirit, or of ſome baſe and ugly Deſign; but they ſhall in a little time diſcharge us of all theſe, and own the Integrity and Juſtice of all that we do in this Matter, and eſteem us as their beſt Friends, and be ready to acknowledge as much to their Intimadoes: Nay, when they come to cool and conſider, as they will do, they cannot but juſtifie us to themſelves, tho' they will not perhaps ſo readily own it to every Body elſe. For the Wiſe Man tells us, that this ſhall certainly

have

have ſuch an Aſcendant over them, as to force them to eſteem us more than thoſe whoſe Converſation they like better, but now find to have been much worſe: *For he that rebuketh a Man, ſhall afterwards find more Favour than he that flattereth with the Tongue*, Prov. 28. 23.

4. They ſhall be brought to Repentance and Amendment, they ſhall be actually reclaim'd from thoſe Vices that they have been formerly ſo much addicted to; and when they are ſo, no one can doubt of their being perfectly at Peace with us; for they ſhall acknowledge the Kindneſs we have done them, and be thankful to God for us, and continually enjoy the Comforts of ſo bleſſed and deſirable a Change.

5. They ſhall be ſo entirely *at Peace with us*, as to come over to us, and help us; they ſhall actually joyn with us, and aſſiſt us in carrying on the ſame Work: They ſhall give the ſame Teſtimony to their entire Reconciliation to all our Proceedings in this Matter, that S. *Paul* did to thoſe, that were afraid to receive him, as doubting the Truth of his Converſion, in offering themſelves now to ſupport that, which they endeavour'd heretofore to deſtroy: And I wiſh they could give the ſame Satisfaction of their Integrity that he did, and by their after Diligence and Zeal, make amends for their former Remiſsneſs and Oppoſition: But whither they do ſo or no, this we are ſure of, they ſhall thus far own us, by joyning

joyning with us, when ſomething extraordinary ſhall even force them to it; As *Talnai*, and the reſt of his Confederates did, that had endeavour'd all they could to obſtruct the Building of the Temple; but when **a Proclamation** came from Court, to require them to lend all the Aſſiſtance they could to the Building of it, very readily comply'd, and did all that they could to the Carrying on of ſo good a Work, *Ezra* 6. 13,14,15. And I doubt not, but the **King's Proclamation** has done the ſame alſo amongſt us, and more I am confident it will do. But whither all or any of theſe Things be ſo or no, this I am ſure of;

6. The next Life ſhall reconcile them to us, and make them approve of what we have done, tho' they never had a good Thought of it before: Nay, perhaps, may have no Benefit by it, or Comfort in it then; for it ſhall be then with them (if they ſhall be ſo unhappy as to have their Enmity laſt ſo long) as our Saviour ſays it ſhall be with thoſe, that *ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *and many others* of GOD's faithful Servants, whom they have perhaps here deſpis'd, in *the Kingdom of Heaven, and they themſelves thruſt out*; they ſhall have nothing to object, either to the one or to the other, but muſt acknowledge the Juſtice of GOD in both, tho' they themſelves have no ſhare in his Mercy.

3. And

3. And *Laſtly*, I ſhall apply this Aſſertion in the Text yet further to this preſent Occaſion, by adding ſomething by way of Direction and Encouragement to this good Work. Encouragement you have enough from what has been already ſaid from the Nature of the Work it ſelf, the Acceptableneſs of it unto GOD, and the Succeſs that it ſhall have: For your Direction therefore in it, that it may prevail and proſper, give me leave rather to remind you of what you have done already, and then to inform or direct you further.

Go on you pious and generous Souls in this bleſſed and honourable Work, as you have hitherto done; 1. With that Prudence and Judgment that has appear'd in all your Actions, when they come to be rightly underſtood, and the Reaſons and Methods of all their Proceedings to be fairly heard: For I dare be bold to ſay, that when thoſe juſt and neceſſary Allowances are made, which all Humane Actions require, eſpecially in Men of ſuch different Tempers and Inclinations, Educations and Ways of Living as you are of, there will be found as much of this, as in any publick Undertaking whatſoever. 2. With that Courage and Conſtancy, which has been hitherto invincible, and has ſtood out againſt the greateſt Difficulties and Diſcouragements: And long may it do ſo, till it makes you *more than Conquerors*, becauſe *always able*

to

to triumph in Christ Jesus, by reason of the continual Success that you meet withall therein. 3. With that Temper that I have always observ'd to be very commendable in you, from that Mixture of Moderation and Gentleness, that has appear'd in the greatest Efforts of your Zeal. And *4thly*, and *Lastly*, With that Uprightness and Integrity of Heart, that has put to silence all your Accusers, when they have not been able to fasten one base and unworthy, one selfish and sordid Action or Design upon you. Go on then, I say, in this Godlike and Excellent Work, making, as you have all along done, the Laws of the Land the Rule of all your Proceedings, and the Glory of GOD, the Interest of Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, the End of them. And may the great GOD of Heaven and Earth, which is always delighted in such Services as these, not only add to your Number, but crown all that you do therein, with all that Success, and with all those other Blessings that so great and so good a Work does every way deserve;

Thro' Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, Three Persons, but One God, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever more. Amen.

FINIS.